Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 COLOMB 00668 010739Z

17/47
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 OMB-01 SP-02 /033 W
---------- 068325
R 231331Z FEB 76 CORRECTED COPY FOR MCN
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4287

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE COLOMBO 668

E.O. 11652:N/A
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, CE
EUBJECT: TOKEN STRIKE HELD

REF: COLOMBO 615

1. SUMMARY: FEBRUARY 20 TOKEN GENERAL STRIKE WAS CARRIED OFF PEACEFULLY AND WITH CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS. MOST AFFECTED SECTOR WAS PUBLIC TRANSPORT. MOST GOVERNMENT AND SOME COMMERCIAL OFFICES WERE OPEN. PARTICIPATION BY GOVERNMENT-AFFILIATED LABOR UNIONS MAY INDICATE THAT GOVERNMENT WAS WILLING TO PASSIVELY ACQUIESCE IN STRIKE. END SUMMARY.

2. ONE-DAY TOKEN GENERAL STRIKE, ORGANIZED BY JOINT COMMITTEE OF TRADE UNION ORGANIZATIONS WAS HELD PEACEFULLY FEBRUARY 20 AND SUCCEEDED IN CLOSING DOWN PUBLIC TRANSPORATION AND SOME OTHER SERVICES. ALTHOUGH SPEARHEADED BY OPPOSITION TROTSKYITE LANKA SAMA SAMAJA PARTY, (LSSP), STRIKE WAS SUPPORTED BY WIDE RANGE OF LABOR UNIONS AFFILIATED WITH OTHER PARTIES ACROSS POLITICAL SPECTRUM, INCLUDING RULING SRI LANKA FREEDOM PARTY (SLFP) AND OPPOSITION UNITED NATIONAL PARTY. THIS WIDESPREAD SUPPORT CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO NATURE OF GRIEVANCE, WHICH WAS NON-IDEOLOGICAL AND INVOLVED LAYING-OFF OF APPRENTICE
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 COLOMB 00668 010739Z

FROM GOVERNMENT PRESS AND SUBSEQUENT HIRING OF NEW

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

EMPLOYEES TO REPLACE TRIKERS THERE.

3. NATIONALIZED BUS SERVICE WAS COMPLETELY CLOSED DOWN AND RAILWAYS RAN ONLY SEVERAL TRAINS THROUGHOUT DAY. MANY GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, IN RESPONSE TO GSO DECISION NOT TO GRANT ANY LEAVE ON FEBRUARY 20, GOT TO WORK BY CAR, BICYCLE AND GOOT OR STAYED OVERNIGHT. THOSE UNIONS WHICH DID NOT PARTICIPATE--POSTAL OFFICERS AND BANK EMPLOYEES, FOR INSTANCE-- DECLINED TO DO SO BECAUSE OF PAROCHIAL GRIEVANCES WITHIN LABOR MOVEMENT. (DESPITE POSTAL OFFICERS' NON-PARTICIPATION IN STRIKE, MAIL SERVICE WAS HALTED BY STRIKE OF LOWER-RANKING CLERKS AND CARRIERS.)

4. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THIS IS FIRST GENEREJ STRIKE DURING LIFE OF THIS GOVERNMENT (I.E. POST-1970). DESPITE SPECULATION THAT GOVERNMENT MIGHT ATTEMPT TO BREAK IT, SRIKE WAS ALLOWED TO OCCUR WITH ONLY ABOVE-MENTIONED NOTICE TO GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES. WHILE LEFTIST UNIONS PROVED THAT, ON THIS OCCASION, THEY COULD ORGANIZE DISRUPTIVE STRIKE, LACK OF STRONG GOVERNMENT OPPOSITION MEASURES (AND INDEED ACTUAL PARTICIPATION OF SLFP UNIONS) LEFT OPEN QUESTION OF WHETHER SUCCESSFUL STRIKE COUD BE MOUNTED IN FACE OF CONCERTED GOVERNMENT OPPOSITION. SLFP STRATEGY MAY HAVE BEEN TO TOLERATE STRIKE AS METHOD FOR WORKERS TO BLOW OFF STEAM. SO AR TROTSKYITES, SINCE BEING EJECTED FROM GOVERNMENT IN SEPTEMBER 1975, HAVE CONFINED STRIKE ACTIONS TO SITUATIONS WHERE WORKERS' GRIEVANCES ARE INVOLVED. THIS INDICATES LSSP MAY STILL FEEL UNCERTAIN WHETHER ITS RANK AND FILE WILL FOLLOW IT OUT ON STRIKE FOR POLITICAL CASUES RATHER THAN BREAD-AND -BUTTER ISSUES. AT SAME TIME, A MORE ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP ROLE MIGHT HELP TO LURE FOLLOWING AWAY FROM RIVAL UNIONS.
VAN HOLLEN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR UNIONS, GENERAL STRIKES, OPPOSITION PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976COLOMB00668
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760077-0189
From: COLOMBO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760224/aaaaauwd.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 COLOMBO 615
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 JUN 2004 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <21 JUN 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: n/a
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, CE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006